GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM AND CULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3736
ANSWERED ON:16.08.2001
EXCAVATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES
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Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ASI has undertaken excavations of Ramayana and Mahabharata as well as Buddhist sites in the country;

(b) if so, the details of sites excavated under each project and the details of its findings, chronological and culture sequence; and

(c) the total expenditure incurred on the excavation of these sites and the number of individual excavation reports brought out so far?

Answer

MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR)

(a) & (b) Yes, Sir. Details are given in the Annexure.

(c) As per available information the expenditure incurred in this regard is Rs.1,90,27,301.00. To date, ten individual excavation reports have been brought out.

ANNEXURE

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) & (b) LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3736 TO BE REPLIED ON 16.08.2001

STATE WISE DETAILS OF THE EXCAVATIONS OF RAMAYANA AND MAHABHARATA AS WELL AS BUDDHIST SITES CONDUCTED BY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

SL.NO. NAME OF THE SITE DETAILS OF FINDINGS AND CULTURAL SEQUENCE

RAMAYANA SITES

Uttar Pradesh

1 Sringaverpura, Distt. Allahabad Seven-fold cultural sequence ranges from Ochre Colour Ware (closing centuries of second millennium B.C.), Painted Grey Ware, Black Slipped and Black-and- Red Ware (10th century B.C.), Northern Black Polished Ware (7th-2nd century B.C.), Red Ware (1st century BC - AD), Gupta, Rajput, Late medieval and East India Company times. A notable discovery from site is a large brick tank complex belonging to 1st century BC - AD.

2 Ayodhya, Distt. Faizabad. The ASI, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Advance Studies, Simla excavated Ayodhya under the Project `Archaeology of Ramayana Sites` during 1977-78 to 1985-86. The excavation showed that the site was first occupied in 7th century B.C. and remained occupied during the Sunga, the Kushana, the Gupta periods to the medieval times.

3 Bhardwaja Ashram, Allahabad The ASI, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Advance Studies, Simla excavated Bhardwaja Ashram under the Project `Archaeology of Ramayana sites` during 1978-79. The excavation revealed occupation of two widely separated periods which are- Period I, the NBP ware period (circa 6th century BC to 2nd century BC), Period II, the Gupta period (circa 4th - 5th century AD) with a gap in between the two.

4 Pariar, Distt. Unnao A small-scale excavation yielded archaeological material of five periods which are OCP (2nd millennium B.C.), Black Slipped Ware, Black and red ware (Late Ist millennium B.C.), PGW (circa 1100 - 600 B.C.), NBP (circa 6th - 2nd centuries B.C.), Sunga-Kushana (2nd cent. B.C. - 3rd century A.D).

MAHABHARATA SITES

Delhi

5 Purana Qila, New Delhi Purana Qila, also known as Indarpat, and identified with Indraprastha, the capital of the Pandavas after bifurcation of the Kuru Kingdom, was excavated earlier in 1954-55 and later for four field seasons. The eight-fold cultural sequence ranges from Mauryan (4th - 3rd century B.C.), Sunga (2nd-Ist century B.C.), Saka-Kushana (Ist-3rd century AD), Gupta (4th-6th century AD), Post-Gupta (7th-9th century AD), Rajput (10th-12th century AD), Sultanate (13th-15th century AD), Mughal (16th - 19th century AD).

Haryana

6 Panipat, Distt. Panipat Remains of Painted Grey Ware culture (dating about beginning of Ist millennium B.C.) have been found in the lower levels.

7 Sonepat, Distt. Sonepat Remains of Painted Grey Ware culture (dating about beginning of Ist millennium B.C.) have been found in the lower levels.

8 Tilpat, Distt. Faridabad Remains of Painted Grey Ware culture (dating about beginning of Ist millennium B.C.) have been found in the lower levels.

Uttar Pradesh

9 Bagpat, Distt. Meerut Horizons of Painted Grey Ware culture (dating about beginning of Ist millennium B.C.) have been found.

10 Ahichchhatra, Distt. Barelly The capital of the north Panchala under Dhrupad

(father of Draupadi, wife of Pandavas) has yielded nine cultural strata: Stratum IX (before 300 BC), VIII (300-200 BC), VII (200-100 BC), VI & V (100BC-100AD), IV (100-350 AD), III (350-750 AD), II (750-850 AD), I (850-1100 AD).

11 Hastinapura, Distt. Meerut — The capital of the Kuru kingdom of the Mahabharata fame was excavated in 1950-52 to ascertain the cultural sequence of the site and linking or otherwise and archeological material with the epic. The five-fold cultural sequence begins with OCW (first half of 2nd millennium BC), PGW (circa early 11th - 18th century BC), NBP (circa 6th-3rd century BC), Sung-Kushana (early 2nd century BC to 3rd century AD) and comes to a close with the medieval (late 11th to early 15th century AD) period. The site has given the evidence of a flood that destroyed the PGW settlement. As a result, the excavator related the archaeological material of the Period II represented by the deluxe ware called the Painted Grey Ware pottery which he subsequently found at such sites like Panipat, Sonepat, Bagpat, Tilpat and Indarpat, which are related to the Kuru family of the Mahabharata period.

12 Ganwaria and Piprahwa, Distt. Siddharthnagar — The excavation at Ganwaria and Piprahwa, the twin mounds of ancient Kapilavastu, has brought to light a stupa with monastery on the corporeal remains of Buddha at the former and an ancient town turned into a monastery at the latter. The sites were in occupation from before the 6th century BC to the Kushana period.

BUDDHIST SITES:

Andhra Pradesh

13 Nagarjunakonda, Distt. Guntur — Revealed a cultural sequence from the lower palaeolithic to the medieval times, besides unearthing the remains of the city of Vijayapuri, which flourished mainly in the 3rd and the 4th century AD. Several Buddhist structures were exposed.

14 Kotturu, Distt. Visakhapatnam — Revealed Buddhist vihara complex.

15 Amaravati, Distt. Guntur — Site yielded remains of 3rd - 2nd century BC to 9-10th century AD. The excavation also brought to light the damaged portion of the original drum, ayaka-platforms and pradakshina-patha of the Mahastupa. Relic caskets were found near western ayaka platform when debris clearance was taken up in 1990-91.

16 Bhattiprolu, Distt. Guntur — Revealed brick built stupa, ayaka platforms, railing and two wings of viharas.

17 Kondapur, Distt. Medak — A stupa mound discovered. Earlier excavations by Archaeology Department of Hyderabad shows that Kondapur was a thriving town from circa 100 BC to 200 AD with a marginal time span of a century on both sides.

18 Ghantasala, Distt. Krishna Chronological sequence of the site was established. The site has a well-known early Buddhist stupa.

19 Peddavegi, Distt. West Godavari The mound Dhanam-Dibba revealed two brick built structures (probably Buddhist stupas).

20 Adurru, Distt. East Godavari Revealed spoked-wheel type stupa.

21 Jujjuru, Distt. Krishna Trial excavation revealed the lime stone copings and the small-scale excavation revealed a brick votive stupa and lead and copper coins of Saka & Satavahana periods.

Bihar

22 Asokan Pillar Site Kolhua, Distt. Muzaffarpur The already famous site for a large brick stupa and a Mauryan pillar with a lion capital has yielded in excavation a large number of votive stupas, miscellaneous objects and pottery in addition to a tank and a monastery datable to the period from Pre - Mauryan to 3rd - 4th century AD.

23 Kesariya, Distt. Champaran Life - size images of Buddha and other deities made of clay mixed with lime and brick jelly with smooth surface treatment placed in a large stupa datable to early centuries of Christian era.

24 Chandimau, Distt. Nalanda A Buddhist temple with courtyard of paved bricks and some votive stupas are recovered. Among important finds are terracotta sealings, fragmentary stone sculptures of Buddha, Tara besides Surya and Vishnu.

25 Antichak (Vikramshila), Dist.Bhagalpur A huge Buddhist monastery, called Vikramshila Mahavihara datable from 9th to 13th century A.D. has been brought to light. Among the important antiquities are stone and bronze sculptures of Buddhist deities.

26 Bakraur (Sujata Kutir), Distt. Bodh Gaya The site, excavated in 1972-73 has yielded Buddhist structural remains and associated finds.

Himachal Pradesh

27 Chaitru, Distt. Kangra. A Buddhist stupa, showing two structural phases has been brought to light. Phase-1 revealed a semi circular undressed pebble stone structure, whereas Phase-2 has yielded burnt brick and undressed pebble stone circular structure. The stupa is dated to circa 1st century AD onwards.

Jammu & Kashmir

28 Ambaran, District Jammu The Buddhist stupa, containing a reliquary copper casket, and fragments of terracotta human heads, dated to the Post 3rd century A.D., have been unearthed.

29 Thisseru, Leh, District Leh (Ladakh) The excavation has exposed a lofty Buddhist shrine, made of mud bricks (historical period).

Karnataka

30 Sannati Distt. Gulberga Excavated the stupa mound. The periphery of the mound revealed evidence of the brick-revetting wall, which was extending the circumference of stupa at the north-eastern side; and series of damaged structures perhaps votive platforms running almost parallel to the drum wall on the north-west of the stupa.

31 Kanganhalli (Sannati), Dist. Gulberga Lead coins of the Satavahana period (1st century BC to 1st century AD) have been found. The coins bear the names of Satavahana kings like `Siri Satakarani, Pulumavi and Yajna Sri`. The most important finding being a sculptured slab bearing the name `Raya Asoka`.

32 Koppal, Distt. Koppal A brick structure and lead coins of Satvahana period (circa 2nd century AD) have been found near Gavimath, a site known for Ashokan rock edict.

Maharashtra

33 Elephanta Caves, Elephanta The lower portion of stupa made of brick and decorated with design over the dome has been excavated probably historical period.

34 Pauni, Distt. Bhandara A Buddhist stupa has been found. Besides Northern Black Polished Ware (circa 6th - 3rd century BC), inscriptions in Mauryan Brahmi (circa 3rd - 2nd century BC), Red Polished Ware (historical period) and Satvahana coins have been discovered.

Orissa

35 Ratangiri, Distt. Buddhist stupa and monastic complex of historical period has been found. (Report published).

36 Lalitgiri, Distt. Buddhist Monastery complex of historical period has been excavated.

37 Udaigiri, Distt. Jajpur Buddha & Bodhisattva heads, a miniature Ganesha, bust of divinities, inscribed terracotta sealings, inscribed stones, terracotta and iron object datable to 9th - 12th century AD

Tripura

38 Shyam Sunder-ka-Tila, Distt. Pillak, South-Tripura — A Buddhist stupa, built on cruciform pattern, and dated circa 9th-10th century A.D., has been brought to light. Among the important discoveries excavated are a life size stone sculpture of Avalokiteswara, a few stone sculptures and a large number of terracotta plaques.

Uttar Pradesh

39 Chowkhandi Stupa Sarnath, U.P. — Remains of a huge Buddhist stupa at the site where Buddha is said to have met his five companions who became his disciples. The site is datable to Gupta period.

40 Sankissa, Distt. Farrukhabad — In addition to the stupa remains, cultural sequence of the Painted Grey Ware (9th century BC to 6th century BC), the Northern Black Polished Ware (6th century BC to 3rd century BC) and Kushana (1st century AD to 3rd century AD) period have been found.